Education and Practice: building social partnership

Linda Mtshali

American State College and University, USA

Abstract

In a white paper developed for the William T. Grant Foundation, my colleagues Cynthia Coburn, Kimberly Geil, and I identified some defining features of partnerships. After reviewing the literature and interviewing leaders from a number of partnerships, here's what we found:

Partnerships are long-term. In a partnership, everyone's in it for the long haul. A good indicator that a collaboration is a partnership proper is they've made it through turnover, and the participants have worked on more than one project together. In other words, they've had to grapple with two big threats to partnerships, changing people and the end of funding. Partnerships are mutualistic. In a partnership, there's a commitment to contributors benefiting from their participation in joint work. Here, "benefit" means more than an exchange of money for services or data. It means that there's a give-and-take with respect to the focus of the work, and a genuine interest in helping other people address their problems, whether that's a teacher who needs better curriculum materials or a researcher who needs data on a new approach to professional development she's developed. Partnerships are intentionally organized. Partnerships don't happen by accident. Teams forming partnerships need to carefully consider who needs to be at the table, how they are going to decide on the focus of their work, and how they'll know

when they are successful. They need to attend to equity, taking into account what voices typically get left out when naming problems and searching for solutions.

Partnerships are focused on problems of practice. Researchers typically study what other researchers think is important to study. But, in a research-practice partnership, the focus is on problems of practice defined in collaboration with educational practitioners. Successful partnerships may also include youth, family, and community voices in defining the problems to be studied and addressed. Collaborations that share these features are not particularly common in education. They require a lot of effort to develop and maintain. The outcomes are often difficult to define, and it's easy for participants to become discouraged by turnover in the partnership and sudden changes to the priorities of policymakers at the federal, state, and district level. At the same time, lots of people are excited about partnerships, and they want to know how to get started and how to find resources to support their work.

Keywords: education, partnership, practice

Introduction

This article is a critical reflection of a linguist's journey towards community-engaged scholarship (CES). It presents insights gained from this process on how researchers in disciplines less known outside academia can begin to conduct CES, and on the current conversation surrounding the various definitions of CES and their interpretation for the tenure and promotion process. Over the past two decades, a welcome shift has been experienced by academia as universities and national organisations supporting them place ever-growing importance on meaningful research and knowledge arising from faculty-community partnerships because of the mutual benefit promised by such collaborations (Boyer 1996). This does not mean that such meaningful work did not exist before, rather that it has taken centre stage (Fitzgerald et al. 2016;

Gelmon, Jordan & Seifer 2013; Morrison & Wagner 2016). Current approaches to engaged scholarship reside on the understanding that academia is not the exclusive generator of knowledge, and that non-academic settings are a source of tremendous learning opportunities and scholarship (Boyer 1996; Fitzgerald et al. 2016). Furthermore, the current view of engagement 'posits a new framework of scholarship that moves away from emphasizing products to emphasizing impact' (Fitzgerald et al. 2016). However, practice has lagged behind promise (Ward & Miller 2016). Given the requirements and expectations of academics, such as the role of scholarship (publications) in tenure and promotion, and the creation of opportunities for students to engage in work with the community, exactly what counts as scholarship in the community has been the subject of much

debate (Barker 2004; Fitzgerald et al. 2016; Gelmon, Jordan & Seifer2013; Janke & Colbeck 2008; O'Meara & Niehaus 2009; Sandmann 2008; Wade & Demb 2009, 2012).

Because of the complexity surrounding the factors that influence faculty engagement (e.g. beliefs about student learning, pedagogy, connections to community, shared epistemology), it has been difficult to find a common definition of engaged scholarship (Morrison & Wagner 2016). In this article I argue that a prescribed common definition is, in fact, not possible or desirable. In general, community-engaged scholarship is 'scholarship that involves a mutually beneficial partnership with community members or organisations outside of the academy' (Commission on Community-Engaged Scholarship in the Health Professions 2005). However, because work with community partners includes service-learning, community-based participatory research and other types of community-based work, and because the conversation about how CES is defined is ongoing, some scholars wonder whether their research in the community qualifies as CES for purposes of tenure and promotion (Calleson, Jordan & Seifer 2005; Furco 2010; Gelmon, Jordan & Seifer 2013). In an effort to support their faculty members, individual universities develop their own definitions – in itself an acknowledgement of the ongoing conversation.

Based on my experience as a linguist starting on a path towards CES, I argue that existing definitions and their campus-level adaptations can unintentionally limit understanding of what CES is for some disciplines, including linguistics. For scholars in these disciplines that are little known outside academia, the path towards CES is much longer than for those in fields that are better understood by the general public, such as STEM disciplines and public health, the birthplace of CES, and steps taken along the way should be recognised by institutions (https://www.ccphealth.org/); Maurana et al. 2001). While developing trusting, meaningful relationships with community partners – a prerequisite for CES – is time-consuming and labour-intensive for anyone, regardless of discipline, I argue that some scholarly fields face an additional challenge because the community (here, anyone outside academia) is unfamiliar with their existence and the objectives of the discipline in the first place.

As a linguist who primarily teaches prospective K–8 teachers, my interest in CES is fuelled by a desire to promote the personal and societal benefits of the scientific study of language to the broader community. Here, I use 'broader commu-

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nity' to refer in general to people outside academia who may otherwise never consider the benefits of linguistics as they navigate the multiple communities to which they belong. The idea of community has typically been tied to place (Dunham 1986); however, as language users and active social beings, we all belong to various communities, some defined by place, some by language, and some by other means such as common interests and undertakings (Bloomfield 1933; Gumperz 1971; Labov 1972). For the purpose of this article, the community is viewed more specifically as a classroom with students and teachers, and it is also further extended to the school, the students' and teachers' families, and to those with whom they interact (Battistich et al. 1995; Brown 1997). While the benefits of understanding language from a scientific perspective are obvious to linguists, they are not immediately obvious to the community. Of utmost importance is the issue of social justice centring around language use and recognition that all dialects of a language are linguistically equal. While most forms of expressing prejudice are frowned upon, overt discrimination based on language is still accepted today because the general public does not understand how language works. Thus, non-stan

dard dialects of English as well as various immigrant languages are viewed as 'bad' and therefore speakers of those language varieties are viewed as less valuable members of society (Baugh 2005; Crawford 1995). A clear case for understanding linguistic diversity as an issue of social justice is presented by bilingual education, which has historically been viewed as an issue for ethnic minority students. Policies have generally favoured the linguistic and cultural majority, with most bilingual programs resulting in monolingualism rather than bilingualism. By making knowledge about language and linguistics accessible to those outside academia, transforming current practices into 'communally-based practices of global learning' can lead to achievable goals of bilingualism, biculturalism, and biliteracy both for ethnic minority and ethnic majority students (Akkari & Loomis 1998, 2012). With a better understanding of language via linguistic study prior to college, students and teachers would begin a ripple effect that would eventually spread throughout their communities, leading to less language-based discrimination. Furthermore, this would have a greater societal impact than studying linguistics only in college, as not every student attends college, and not every college student studies linguistics. To get to this point, however, students and

teachers need to understand the building blocks of language and language development in order to arrive at the conclusion that all language varieties are linguistically equal; this can be achieved via working partnerships between linguists and K–12 schools. Nevertheless, because of the disconnect between what linguistics is and does, and the community's unfamiliarity with or lack of understanding of linguistics, establishing such partnerships in a way that is mutually beneficial and not driven by the academy is extremely time-consuming. Teachers need time to understand the potential contributions of linguistics to themselves and their students, and their potential contributions to the academy; the linguist has to do the same.

While I am now engaged in such a partnership with a teacher at a local middle school, it took more than two years to develop a relationship based on mutual trust which, in turn, brought us to the point where we could begin a truly bidirectional partnership that also involved scholarship – in the sense of outcomes that are 'rigorous and peer-reviewed' (Gelmon et al. 2012). In this article I reflect critically on insights gained from this process and offer linguists and scholars from other lesser known disciplines suggestions for becoming involved in CES, as well as encourage them to challenge the

definitions of CES and their interpretation for the tenure and promotion process.

CES definitions and their interpretations

Over the past two decades CES has been identified as one of the core missions of higher education (Boyer 1996; Gelmon et al. 2013, p. 58). One goal of CES is for disciplinary faculty to use their expertise in collaboration with community partners, thereby simultaneously creating new knowledge and contributing to the public good. This has been highly appealing to universities and researchers who want to take their work outside academia and create meaningful and mutually beneficial partnerships, responding to Boyer's (1996, p. 11) challenge for higher education to 'become a more vigorous partner in the search for answers to our most pressing social, civic, economic and moral problems and … reaffirm its historic commitment to … the scholarship of engagement' (italics added). While this sounds positive from all perspectives, it also presents some unexpected challenges. On the one hand, exactly how to define the 'scholarship of engagement' and community-engaged scholarship is still currently the subject of debate, which leaves room for differences in interpretation. On the other hand, current definitions assume that all disciplines should be able to engage in CES in the same way.

Over the years, the term engaged scholarship (or scholarship of engagement) has referenced a multitude of university-community collaborative work, including service-learning, community-based participatory research, outreach, community development, and different forms of civic engagement (Calleson, Jordan & Seifer 2005; Gelmon, Jordan & Seifer 2013; Sandmann 2008). These different types of engagement obviously have different outcomes and levels of scholarship, which impact aspects of tenure and promotion expectations. Sandmann (2008, p. 101), in her review of the literature on what the scholarship of engagement has meant over the years, concludes that CES is 'still emerging from its "definitional anarchy" and is still evolving as an interdisciplinary field for academic research'. Community-engaged scholarship currently combines 'the principles of community engagement with accepted standards of scholarship' (Gelmon, Jordan & Seifer 2013, p. 59), and is thus defined further at the level of the institution. This is an important point, because scholars work both within their broader disciplinary framework and within the parameters established by their institutions. This may not be best practice, however, given the diversity of disciplines and the knowledge that communities have, or do not have, about those disciplines. Morri-

son and Wagner (2016) argue that the faculty perspective must be taken into account in the CES debate. In order to 'make sense of the complex list of factors influencing how faculty engage, their reasons for doing it, and how institutions can support them', we need to understand 'how faculty define and make meaning of CES for themselves' (Morrison & Wagner 2016, p. 9). And addressing the issue of potential research partnerships with non-academics, Ward and Miller (2016, p. 189) state, 'How the individual work of both faculty and staff is marginalized, valued, validated, recognized, and rewarded through formal promotion structures and processes remains an area of needed attention within and across institutions of higher education'. Therefore, an argument can be made that a monolithic definition of CES is neither possible nor desirable. Yet, faculty need guidance on how to situate their work.

The California State University (CSU) is the largest four-year public university system in the United States, with 23 campuses. A survey of the CSU's websites on community engagement shows that, at the time of writing, only six campuses specifically define or discuss community-engaged scholarship and emphasise the importance of reciprocity in university-community partnerships. Fourteen other campuses emphasise service-learning as

the primary focus of community-engagement work, and a few others also encourage participatory-action research, internships and other forms of research, teaching or service that benefit the community. This range of emphases is expected, and it is likely that more campuses will specifically address CES in the future. However, this also means that individual campuses may place a different value on various types of work that faculty conduct in the community.

According to one institution's definition, in the context of the broader national conversation, CES 'is centered on a mutually-beneficial collaboration between the university and a community partner outside the academy', contributes to the public good and 'meets the needs of the community partner as defined and expressed by the partner'. Moreover, for university-community partnership work to be considered CES (as opposed to service-learning or participatory-action research, for example), it must either involve a 'strong bidirectional relationship' or be 'community driven', as shown in the last two columns in the chart in Figure 1. This chart is provided on the institution's CES webpage to help explain the campus definition of CES and to guide faculty towards rigorous CES work. The original source is a document created by the US Environmental Protection Agen-

cy's National Center for Environmental Research (NCER, 2015), whose goal is to support funding for quality research related to the environment. However, recognising the importance of people within communities and how significant outcomes from community research can only be achieved through the direct involvement of the community, the NCER drafted a primer on community-engaged research (CEnR). This document is directed to academics in general, recognises 'the strengths of the community institutions and individual members' and identifies CEnR along a continuum of engagement between researcher and community partner, as outlined in the chart below. CES, as separate from service-learning or community-based research, involves only the last two columns.

The above CES definition and its interpretation are helpful guides for scholars to determine what type of work constitutes CES. At the same time, faculty in disciplines which are not well known outside academia, such as linguistics, find themselves ill-positioned to engage in such scholarship for two reasons: (1) the community is unfamiliar with the discipline and its potential contribution to the public good, and is therefore unprepared to engage in true bidirectional collaboration, and (2) the linguist/researcher lacks a network of relationships with communi-

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ties apart from those with which they conduct their research (e.g. documenting or extensively studying a language). The combination of these two factors leads to a lengthier process for linguists as they pursue CES if their CES work is outside the typical linguist's communities of focus.

Figure 1. Spectrum of community involvement in research

It is important to emphasize that this is neither the fault of the community nor of the field of linguistics. While more linguists today than at any other time are becoming involved in outreach and seeking to work with teachers in K–12 schools, convincing teachers and schools to incorporate linguistics in the curriculum has been slow because of a lack of understanding, curricular constraints, strong adherence to traditional notions of grammar and the nature of adopting curricular changes in general (Reaser 2010). Part of the reason for this, however, is that, traditionally, linguistics has been a higher education discipline and its broader value to society is not well understood by the general public, and this has been detrimental to both the field and the broader community. Simply put, outside academia linguistics is primarily misunderstood as either the language police or the polyglot society. Usually the first question people ask when they learn

someone is a linguist is 'How many languages do you speak?', followed or preceded by a comment along the lines of 'Uh oh, I better watch what I say'. Neither of these is actually true of linguists who generally concern themselves with speakers' actual knowledge and use of language (though some linguists do speak multiple languages) rather than prescriptive grammatical rules. Linguists have worked in and with communities to document languages or conduct other research, and sometimes this has served the needs of the community. For example, linguists have contributed a great deal to language documentation, whether the linguist sought out a community or vice versa. In the case of the Kawaiisu speakers in Tehachapi, California, it was they who approached linguist Jocelyn Ahlers to assist with the documentation of their language; the community-determined goals and outcomes constitute CES work even under more prescribed definitions (personal communication). The work of linguists also is critical to the conversation about bilingualism and bilingual education, speech and language pathology, text-to-speech and speech-to-text software development, education, law and public health, to name a few of an ever-growing list of benefits. However, not all of these applications are obviously linked with linguistic study in the public view. Lin-

guistics is not usually discovered by students (myself included) until college. In recent years, recognising these shortcomings, linguistics has made it a priority for linguists to become more active in making the discipline 'recognizable' outside academia via public outreach and involvement in K–12 classrooms (Denham & Lobeck 2010; Godley, Reaser & Moore 2015; Linguistics Society of America2017; Reaser et al. 2017).

As a linguist who teaches prospective teachers, I have come to recognise the role that my current students will have in making language relevant to their students – and the communities to which they belong – beyond their expected understanding that language is used for communication, reading and writing. While the role of linguistics in the K–12 classroom was explored and recognised earlier by a handful of people (Denham & Lobeck 2010; Fillmore & Snow 2000; Honda & O'Neil 1993, 2008; Honda, O'Neil & Pippin 2004; Reaser et al. 2017), recognition has grown over the years, but not yet to a level where it has made a significant impact in our communities. Thus, the general public still does not have a clear understanding of what linguistics is or does. On the other hand, linguists do not have first-hand experience working in K–12 classrooms and therefore are unfamiliar with the needs of students and teachers. As Gelmon, Jordan and Seifer (2013, p. 63) state, 'in some disciplines and institutions, faculty may not know where to find a "real" community-based organization or understand how a collaboration might be beneficial to their scholarship, their students, and their institution'.

Linguists have ideas of how linguistics can contribute to a faculty–community partnership. However, given the interpretation of the CES definition that the partnership be 'bidirectional' or 'community driven' as it addresses an issue 'defined and expressed by the partner', linguists such as myself find themselves in a difficult position. On the one hand, a potential community partner, in this case a school, or a K–12 teacher, does not know that linguistics exists, what it does, or that there are linguists at a university with whom they could collaborate and create new knowledge for the benefit of both partners. In fact, the community may not even know that an issue might exist in the first place. For example, discrimination based on language persists without notice even as other forms of overt discrimination are generally frowned upon. This can take the shape of discrimination based on non-standard dialects of English, languages other than English spoken in the US, or even English spoken as a second language. Looking at

language from a scientific perspective can help not only to develop students' inquiry skills, but also to highlight the fact that all dialects are linguistically equal (Crawford 1995; Reaser et al. 2017). This is an issue of social justice and would potentially translate into less language-based discrimination in the school, family and broader communities with which the students and their families interact. But if the community is not aware of what linguistics does or of an existing issue that could be addressed, and if the linguist does not have a pre-existing partnership that may have been established for some purpose other than CES, then the process towards CES will take that much longer – longer, I would argue, than for someone in a discipline that is at least somewhat better understood outside academia. Furthermore, the impact of the work in the larger community, outside of the school, for example, may not be visible until much later, as the students become agents of change within their families and other communities. In turn, the characteristics of these communities – extended families or neighbourhoods – will also direct the impact of the work. It will take a lot longer to create change both with and by students whose families support the 'English-only movement', for example.

If CES is defined in such a way that it is restricted to a collaboration instigated by the community partner to address a need experienced by that community, the linguist cannot approach a community partner with an idea for a project or an issue that could be addressed via the partnership. As I suggest in the later section on lessons learned, in order to achieve a truly bidirectional collaboration the scholar must first engage in various activities (e.g. volunteering, community outreach) that will nurture trust and inform the partner of the objectives and societal benefits of the discipline, and must in turn be informed by the partner and their needs. While this may appear true for any discipline, the crucial point here is that more familiar disciplines (e.g. art, STEM, or health-related) will not face as long a process. In the next section I reflect further upon my own experience and offer suggestions for how linguists, and others from similarly challenged disciplines, can develop community partnerships that will lead to community-engaged scholarship.

Reflections of a linguist's journey towards a CES partnership

Since beginning to work with undergraduates who are prospective K–8 teachers a decade ago, I have been contemplating the role of linguistics in the school curriculum. Having graduated from a highly theoretical linguistics department, where we were all majoring in linguistics

and then working on our doctorate degrees, I had taken it for granted that interest in linguistics was just there in the classroom. Everyone was taking linguistics because they loved the subject for its own sake. However, faced with students who were taking linguistics classes not because they liked linguistics, but because they were required to take these classes, I found myself answering a lot of questions about the reasons we were studying language from a scientific perspective. While some students loved the subject, others struggled to understand its purpose. It was not difficult to demonstrate how certain aspects would be beneficial to them in their future profession as teachers. For example, learning about dialects, linguistic diversity and bilingualism were topics that most students immediately identified with and could see how they would be relevant. To some extent, learning about phonetics and phonology, the sound system of language, was also accepted as playing a role in how they could help their students to read and write, and understand their students' phonetic spelling in the early grades. What was more difficult was keeping that interest when doing serious linguistic analysis, which can be tedious and challenging, and getting students to think of ways they could use linguistics when they became teachers. I further realised that I, too, had a limited understanding of how it might be relevant, and that without working in the K–8 classroom with teachers and students, I would continue to be limited in my understanding.

The idea of working with teachers in the classroom is not a new one. As mentioned in the previous section, Honda, O'Neil, Pippin, Denham and Lobeck have been involved in such work for some time on small projects that started either in their children's classrooms or with teachers they already knew and who were comfortable with them. However, while this work constituted engaged scholarship, it was not necessarily community-engaged scholarship. This work was intended to introduce students to linguistics and was also a way to test the hypotheses entertained by linguists about the role that linguistics played in the primary and secondary grades, such as developing scientific thinking skills (Denham & Lobeck 2010; Honda & O'Neil 2008). The bidirectional and reciprocal components of the partnership were not obvious.

In Spring 2015, I had not yet encountered the field of CES, but I wanted to begin working in a classroom. I approached my daughter's former fourth grade teacher and suggested some ways in which we could talk about language and linguistics and how this could address some of the recent common core

curriculum standards, such as developing scientific writing, under the college and career readiness standards, or developing foundational skills of word analysis (e.g. working with Latin and Greek roots). The teacher was very open to the idea and graciously offered class time for me to volunteer once a week during the semester. The lessons were primarily identified by me and approved by the teacher. The students enjoyed all the activities that we conducted (e.g. figuring out parts of speech from Lewis Carol's Jabberwocky, or Greek and Latin roots from Harry Potter's spells); however, we did not create new knowledge, as necessitated by scholarship. I did not know how to properly articulate the goals of this work within the context of CES because I was not familiar with CES. I was focused on how linguistics could be used in the classroom in a way that would engage students, and what I could learn from the experience so that I could bring that to my own classroom for future teachers at the university. This had the potential to be CES, but it was not, and I really did not know how to do it. No research had been conducted, only practice of linguistics with fourth graders, and observation of what that might mean for my own prospective teacher students.

During the same semester, my institution announced that there would be a year-long faculty learning community (FLC) focused on community-engaged scholarship, and the brief description in the announcement seemed to be exactly what I needed for the work I wanted to do. I applied to participate in the FLC, and joined the FLC the following year. The FLC had three other faculty members from different disciplines and two facilitators. I naively believed that, based on my experience with the fourth grade, I would be ready to engage in CES a year from then, and I saw the FLC as a supportive environment for that type of work. The plan was to develop a new partnership (for practical reasons I wanted to work with a school that was close to my university) and begin the work as soon as possible. As we began discussing CES and what it entailed, I realised that I had not understood it properly. In particular, the requirement that there be a 'bidirectional' or 'community driven' partnership involved in identifying the issue to be addressed became an almost insurmountable challenge. Approaching a teacher at a new school with an idea about a partnership in a field that was not well understood by the community, and expecting the teacher to recognise a potential need that the partnership could address, seemed impossible. Also, the school I wanted to partner with was a new school that my children were attending. As such,

I had the slight, but marginal, advantage of being an 'insider'. The teachers knew me as a new parent, but we had no history and no relationship. Nevertheless, this was helpful as I did not approach teachers as a complete 'outsider' (Post et al. 2016).

After a few attempts at connecting with teachers, which included offers by me to volunteer and collaborate on any language-related projects they might identify, I successfully connected with the teacher with whom I am currently working. This was a longer process than I had anticipated, spanning the academic year, which may have been attributable to a number of factors. First, the teachers may have been overwhelmed by the amount of work they had to accomplish during the year, and adding one more thing to the schedule had seemed prohibitive. Second, and I would argue more likely, the relevance of linguistics and what a potential partnership could accomplish was not obvious to the teachers. Third, and also probably equally significant, my in-between position as an insider–outsider at the beginning of the year shifted closer to 'insider' towards the end of the year, thus providing an advantage (Dwyer & Buckle 2009). Still, despite this advantage, it took more than two years to begin the CES work.

When I met with the teacher, an 8th grade humanities instructor, I was forthcoming from the beginning about the goals of a potential partnership and shared with her a tremendously helpful tool, a matrix for planning and implementing a CES project (Figure 2), adapted by my university from the original work of Jeffrey Howard at the Ginsberg Center, University of Michigan (2007). The matrix outlines the purposes of a partnership and emphasises the role of the community partner.

Figure 2 Matrix for planning and implementing a CES project

I knew by the time we met, which was at the end of one year of effort and learning about CES, that community organisations are often tired of being approached by university faculty who want to conduct their research there (the 'parachute' approach), so I wanted to make it clear from the beginning that this was not that type of work. The teacher was excited to see that the goals were truly paying attention to the needs of the school, and even though we did not have a clear idea of how the project would work, we decided to give it a try the following year and see what happened. We discussed some possible things that we could do, and the teacher identified the need for her students to improve their fundamental knowledge of how English works so they

could become better writers. That was a good start and the beginning of a developing relationship.

Over the course of the following school year we co-taught a group of 8th grade students once a week, each time responding to the needs of the students as identified by the teacher and the students. We worked on grammatical structure, Latin and Greek roots, and non-standard dialects of English. By the end of the year, we had an engaged partnership and we had built trust. We understood what each of us could bring to the partnership and how the students could benefit from our collaboration. So by the end of the first year of collaborative work we were poised to engage in CES the following year.

The school is designed around project-based learning, a teaching methodology which is student-centred and via which students acquire skills and knowledge by engaging in long-term inquiry around a particular problem or real-world question (Blumenfeld et al. 2005; Dewey 1959). While the actual work is outside the scope of this article, we are currently exploring ways to incorporate linguistics into the students' projects, rather than have it as a peripheral subject of interest, with the goal of both strengthening their writing skills and making them more aware of linguistic diversity so they

are more informed citizens and users of language. We have designed specific instruments to evaluate whether and how students achieve these goals, hence our work now includes scholarship and the creation of new knowledge, which will benefit both the community and the university.

What should be clear from this reflection is that advancing to the starting line for conducting CES in a field such as linguistics is a very long process. In my case, it took over two years. Some disciplines may have a shorter path because they are better understood by the community. For example, STEM disciplines, because of their prominence in the media and in the school curriculum, may find it easier to engage in this type of work. Likewise, the health professions, where this work began, are also better understood and the benefits to the community are more immediately obvious. Even within the field of linguistics there are subdisciplines which are easier or more difficult for the public to access. For example, sociolinguistics and language acquisition are much more accessible, while the formal study of phonetics and phonology (sound systems) or syntax (language structure) is less accessible. Linguists from these subfields, such as myself, must find ways to connect their work to the broader interests of the community and be committed

to a long-term partnership so that eventually the more abstract aspects of linguistic study can become accessible and meaningful. For example, it would be difficult to form a partnership with a school on the grounds of studying the sounds of language without connecting it to the role that sounds play in learning foreign languages, or how non-native accents can be explained and why some accents are viewed as more desirable or less desirable than others. Some linguists have forged pathways within the public health field, focusing on issues of public health literacy, and have successfully contributed to the public good by offering practical solutions to creating more accessible health information that is also linguistically and culturally informed (Ellis, Connor & Marshall 2014; Parmer et al. 2015; Zarcadoolas 2005).

This does not mean that the work for these more easily recognised disciplines is any less demanding – researchers still have to develop trusting relationships with community partners, and this is time-consuming. What it does mean, however, is that linguistics, in general, and potentially other social sciences and humanities have an additional obstacle to overcome, which is the fact that the community does not know that they exist.

To sum up, there are two reasons why CES is difficult for linguists: (1) the definition of CES and its interpretation, which may discourage participation in CES in the first place, and (2) a lack of understanding of linguistics outside academia. In the next section I offer suggestions for how this type of work can be conducted more effectively by inviting linguists to contribute to the creation of policies clarifying community-engaged scholarship expectations for tenure and promotion at their institutions and beyond, and to engage in a number of activities that will improve understanding of linguistics outside academia in order to eventually break this cycle.

Lessons learned and potential solutions

I learned two things from this two-year process. First, as new modes of research develop, we have to be careful with how we define them and how those definitions are interpreted, both at the individual and the institutional level. Second, linguistics as a field needs to do a better job of making the discipline a household name. Students should not have to wait till college to hear about linguistics.

Regarding the first point, current definitions and interpretations of CES mean that CES will require additional time for some disciplines. As I have shown, it can take years to even begin to conduct research that may subsequently become

published material, which is what promotion and tenure committees expect to see (Gelmon, Jordan & Seifer 2013). Because not all disciplines have the same standing in the community, they cannot all begin CES work in the same way or within the same timeframe. This has significant implications for the tenure and promotion process and may discourage scholars from participating in CES altogether, forcing them to focus instead on projects they can quickly turn into publications, but which may not be as meaningful. Most universities do not offer the support needed by faculty to engage in this type of work, yet they expect this type of work to be conducted. A possible solution to this is for scholars to advocate for the development of promotion and tenure policies that recognise the lengthy preliminary work done by the scholar with the community partner as an explicitly essential and valid part of a faculty member's scholarship productivity, even though that work may not be published or publishable in traditional venues. The Community-Campus Partnership for Health website provides a toolkit for scholars (https://ccph.memberclicks.net) to help them prepare tenure and promotion portfolios highlighting their work in the community, and these scholars should be able to use the work entailed in building a community-scholar partnership that pre-

cedes actual CES work as scholarship, rather than service.

With respect to the second point, the field of linguistics has already recognised the need to make linguistics better understood. If this were achieved, and people in the community understood 'linguistics' the way they understand 'mathematics' (mathematics itself has its own issues with being misunderstood by the public, yet it is still better understood than linguistics), then the journey for a linguist wanting to engage in CES might be somewhat shortened. Some things are already being done to make this a reality, but the efforts are scattered across the country and conducted unsystematically by people like myself who are interested in this type of work. The Linguistics Society of America encourages public outreach, including participation in STEM events where community members can see language as a science, and has a committee on Language in the School Curriculum charged with exploring and pursuing 'ways in which the linguistics community can have an effect on school instruction in language-related topics, including linguistics' (Linguistics Society of America website). Current efforts include exploring more ways to incorporate linguistics in schools and encouraging more university faculty to partner with teachers, particularly at the high-school level,

to introduce linguistics to students. In addition, linguists can follow the models of Connor, Rubin and Zarcadoolas, who have successfully merged their linguistics interests and professional training with public health (Ellis, Connor & Marshall 2014; Parmer et al. 2015; Zarcadoolas, Pleasant & Greer 2005). To these efforts I would add volunteerism, collaboration between linguists and faculty members in other disciplines to seek convergent goals and possible partnerships (Anderson 2017) and working with university students who are studying to be teachers (see also Denham & Lobeck 2010 and Fillmore & Snow 2000).

Based on my experience, a linguist–teacher partnership requires a lot of volunteer time; therefore, linguists interested in pursuing this type of work should consider carefully their reasons for doing so (short-term product, long-term impact and product), the time they have to devote to it, and the level of departmental and institutional support. It is also critical that, in pursuing such a partnership, the linguist respond to the teacher's and their students' needs, which may require classroom observation, becoming familiar with state standards, and having open discussions about the needs identified by the teacher and how linguistics can provide inquiry-based creative ways of addressing those needs. Because volunteering

may not always be recognised as an academic pursuit, when discussing this work for the purpose of tenure or promotion, faculty members should highlight the contribution of the collaboration to the community and to their own professional development, as I have done here: it is a pathway towards CES and the work itself has academic value. Furthermore, as more faculty members become involved in community-engaged work (whether service-learning or CES), linguists should seek out collaboration with faculty in other disciplines with whom they may share similar perspectives on CES (Morrison & Wagner 2016).

While it is unrealistic and impractical to have a linguist conducting CES in every K–12 classroom, linguists who work with future teachers at the undergraduate level have the opportunity to make this type of work relevant and to prepare their students to become teachers who will use linguistics in their classrooms for all its individual and societal benefits. Linguists need to develop partnerships with teachers so that they can tailor college-level linguistics curricula accordingly. One can envision an undergraduate course where prospective teachers regularly engage with students in schools with which the instructors (linguists) have established partnerships and actually conduct research. The prospective teachers might

discuss the role of linguistics in education with each other and with their instructor, meet with the public school teachers, and together establish some research topic of interest to both (e.g. how can students learn what sentence fragments are, and how can they edit their own writing for fragments?). The prospective teachers might subsequently (1) discuss linguistically informed approaches to understanding fragments, such as inquiry-based exercises that illustrate what fragments are and how they are not always 'bad' as is typically taught (they are actually desirable in spoken language); (2) hypothesise what types of activities would lead students to recognise and edit fragments in their own writing; and (3) conduct research in the classroom to evaluate whether those methods were successful and whether students understood that there is a difference between spoken and written language. This discussion could be extended further to differences in registers and dialects, and has the potential to positively contribute to the public good.

Linguists who do not work specifically with future teachers would benefit from highlighting this type of work in their classes as well. Most undergraduates in linguistics do not go on to become researchers, but rather become technical writers, lawyers, speech and language pathologists, or foreign language teachers. K–12 education is a profession they should consider, and it might be one they would consider if the connections between linguistics and education were made evident. Researchers and teachers in fields that are in a similar situation to linguistics would benefit from the same suggestions offered above. Whatever the field, finding service opportunities in order to develop relationships with community partners can lead to the development of a CES project. One can even envision a service-to-CES pathway where faculty and students engage in service-learning opportunities, building trusting partnerships between the university and the community partner, which then leads to CES (Vogel & Seifer 2011). Service-learning can be used towards this goal, as in the case of prospective teachers working with linguistically and culturally diverse students as they themselves build sociolinguistic knowledge and language skills that they can use in their future classrooms (Fan 2013). Subsequently, this work can lead to CES for students and linguists alike.

Designing a university curriculum that emphasises the role of the discipline to the broader community will create citizens who take that knowledge into the community. As scholars in these fields, we need to adopt a long-term perspective

and expect future generations to have a better understanding of these lesser known fields than has the current generation.

Conclusions

Community-engaged scholarship is encouraged by universities and funding agencies as it offers opportunities for conducting meaningful work with community partners for the mutual benefit of the community and the researcher. As such, CES is both a challenging and a rewarding avenue for research, as well as a high-stakes item in the review process for tenure and promotion. These two factors, the topic of this article, have different implications given the current conversation in the CES field. As a relatively new concept that incorporates scholarship in community-engaged work, CES is still being redefined, even at the individual university level. Current definitions and their interpretations can be too restrictive for disciplines that are not well understood outside academia, such as linguistics, thereby creating unanticipated challenges. While CES requires a significant investment of time for any faculty dedicated to cultivating trust-based community relationships – a prerequisite for CES work – faculty in these disciplines have to spend much more time not only cultivating the partnership, but also making the discipline and its benefits understandable

to the partner without resorting to a top–down approach to research (where the academic imposes the research on the partner). This is necessary in order for both partner and researcher to arrive at a mutually beneficial project, which is a fundamental expectation of CES. A more prescribed definition, set at institutional level, can have the unintentional effect of limiting understanding of what CES can be, and in effect discourage the pursuit of CES by some disciplines.

Based on my personal experience with the process of engaging in CES as a linguist, I have offered suggestions for linguists and academics in similar disciplines on how to begin such work and how to advocate for such work to be recognised for tenure and promotion purposes. The faculty member can seek out service opportunities in the community to learn about the potential partner's needs and inform them about their discipline as part of the partnership negotiation process. Further, they can suggest and advocate for the creation of university policies that take the lengthy and complex preliminary work of CES into account as part of the faculty member's scholarly work for the tenure and promotion process, and they can also participate in activities that will make their discipline more accessible to the public, thereby shortening the process in the long term.

Partnerships also benefit from having a model for how research will inform the work of the partnership. One such model is Design-Based Implementation Research (DBIR). DBIR projects share four features: (a) a focus on persistent problems of practice from multiple stakeholders' perspectives; (b) a commitment to iterative, collaborative design; (c) a concern with developing theory related to both classroom learning and implementation through systematic inquiry; and (d) a concern with developing capacity for sustaining change in systems. There are case studies of DBIR, resources, and workshops to help organize DBIR projects at learndbir.org. The R+P Collaboratory adaptation sites are using the DBIR approach. In addition, researchers in the Collaboratory are facilitating the work of a group of Math-Science Partnerships funded by both the NSF and U.S. Department of Education to investigate strategies for negotiating problems of practice that can become the focus of joint work. They are presenting on this topic at this week's conference for grantees in these two programs.

The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching holds workshops on a form of DBIR called "Improvement Research." Their efforts are focused on building understanding of how to focus continuous improvement efforts around small tests of change that build toward big, positive impacts on educational systems. Carnegie and its partners have shown early success in developing powerful interventions to improve developmental mathematics teaching and learning in community colleges.

Finally, my colleagues Cynthia Coburn, Caitlin Farrell, Annie Allen and I are also engaged in an empirical study of research-practice partnerships. In our study, we are examining the dynamics of partnerships and how partnership design and the local context shape these dynamics and, in turn, research use in districts. Together with our colleagues James P. Spillane, Heather Hill, and Derek Briggs, we will be continuing to explore research use in partnerships through the new National Center for Research in Policy and Practice, an IES-funded Knowledge Utilization Center. Stay tuned for more about this work.

Who Funds Research-Practice Partnerships?

Finally, there are a few programs to which researchers and practitioners seeking funding can turn to, such as the US Department of Education's Institute for Education Sciences' Researcher-Practitioner Partnership program, and the National Science Foundation's STEM-C Partnerships program. These programs

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provide funding for forming deeper partnerships, as well as for joint work to improve outcomes for students.

For partnerships that want to try out a DBIR approach to organizing research and development, there are two programs to which partnerships can apply. At the Institute of Education Sciences, the Continuous Improvement Research in Education supports this kind of research. At the National Science Foundation, the Implementation Research strand of the DRK-12 program is a program that funds DBIR projects.

Bridging the Divide: A Plea for Persistence.

Funding for collaborations between researchers and practitioners is short-term, but real partnerships take many years to develop and mature. During that time, leaders will change jobs, and priorities will shift. Much can benefit can still be gained from researchers and practitioners working together through such changes, but it takes persistence, patience, and a willingness to work through difficulties.

One way to think of a research-practice partnership is that it's the foundation for a new infrastructure for relating research and practice. It may be small and local, but it is rich in relationships and commitment to solving big problems of education. Those relationships, as this series in the Shanker Blog indicate, are key to lasting reform.

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